



# Mississippi Department of Human Services

## Press Release

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Release Date: 6/15/2015*

### **MDHS Investigators SNAP Welfare Fraud**

(Shuqualak, Miss.) — Mississippians support helping struggling families put food on the table, but they also want to know their taxpayer dollars are spent wisely. The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Program Integrity investigates stores which accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to ensure the integrity of the nation's first line of defense against hunger.

Thursday, June 11, state investigators from the Special Investigations Unit, and local law enforcement from Noxubee County served warrants on three individuals accused of SNAP fraud. Fraud generally is committed by store owners who exchange benefits for cash or other ineligible items.

Store owners were charged with exchanging welfare benefits for cash for more than \$39,000.

C & K Grocery, 12701 Hwy 21-39 West, Shuqualak, MS 39361

Store Owner: Myrtle Ann Hagood

Sams G & G, 1984 Highway 145, Shuqualak, MS 39361

Store Owners: Sammy and Lisa Lindsey

MDHS Director of Special Investigations Frank Saddler said, "SNAP is designed to help low-income people make food purchases for their families. SNAP fraud, however, hurts everyone. Local stores where purchases would have been made suffer a loss of revenue and, of course, families suffer because now that local store can no longer accept benefits for appropriate food purchases."

Small "mom and pop" grocers are usually the type of stores targeted by those trying to defraud a system in place to help those who are at risk of food insecurity, such as the elderly and children. Local residents can help spot fraud in their grocery stores.

If you suspect a store owner, clerk or client is misusing SNAP benefits, call the Fraud hotline at 1-800-299-6905. SNAP fraud is a crime.

#### **SNAP FACTS FOR SFY 2014**

21.9 percent of Mississippians enrolled in SNAP.
More than \$938 million in benefits issued in the state.
39.7 percent of Noxubee County residents enrolled in SNAP
More than \$6.2 million in benefits issued in the county.

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